

**FINANCE & UTILITY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Wednesday, January 16, 2019, 6:00 PM**

The Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Jeff Snoots. Those present included: Mayor Jeff Snoots, Council Member John Dayton, Council Member Tom Smith, Committee Member Carroll Jones, City Administrator David Dunn, City Clerk Carrie Myers, Public Works Director John Gerstner, Chief of Police Milt Frech, Water Superintendent Matt Campbell, Planning & Zoning Administrator Bruce Dell, Project Coordinator Abby Ingram, and Accountant Rich Marshall.

- 811 West Potomac Street Discussion

John Strong and Jason Azar explained the latest plan for the building. At this point, the best options seems to be to place the police operations on the first floor and the public works operations on the second floor. Chief Frech and John Gerstner discuss very minimal changes they would like made to the current plan. Mr. Strong will make those changes and submit back to the City, then the plan will be taken to the Mayor and Council for final design approval.

- H Street Property Offer

There was a discussion regarding ownership of the lot vs. right-of-way only. Mr. Dell stated that if the offer was accepted, the applicant would have to go through the proper channels to convert the lot into a building lot, etc. Those costs would be extra absorbed by the applicant. The City would first need to accept the offer of \$20,000. The Committee recommended sending this item to the full Council for approval.

- Utility Bill Forgiveness – Yourtee Customer

The residence at 2126 Rohrersville Road had very dirty water after the spring flooding and shut down of Yourtee Springs. The City actually reimbursed the residents for the cost of a whole-house water filter because we were unable to provide better water quality at that time. The residents also asked for forgiveness of the water bill for the months of July-September since the water was not usable and so much of it had to be flushed. The consensus of the committee is to charge only the ready-to-serve rate for this time period only.

- Water Produced vs. Billed

Mr. Dunn stated he is not ready to report hard numbers for this item. Staff is still trying to pinpoint how much water is lost between production and billing due to various items such as hydrant flushing, water leaks, etc. EPA says an acceptable amount of loss is anywhere from 10-30%, but we would like to be able to narrow our rate down more specifically. Mr. Dunn will report back in the coming days. Mr. Dayton stated he was curious about this number so the City could look for items to begin fixing so as to help with utility rates.

- Sidewalk Citation – 302 Brunswick Street

This resident was given a sidewalk citation, but stated that several past Public Works Superintendents had said this problem was the City's responsibility due to a snow plow breaking the sidewalk in the early 2000s. The consensus of the Committee was to have the City fix this issue and remove the citation from the property.

- Martin's Creek Loan Program

Mr. Dunn discussed options for a loan program to the homeowners along Martin's Creek for the restoration of their yards and property adjacent to the stream bed. Such costs could be extreme, sometimes nearing \$100,000. The consensus of the Committee was that the City did not have the cash flow to loan these amounts of money for this project. The Committee is comfortable offering

to reimburse the residents should they choose to apply for the \$750 MDE permit to complete any restoration work on their own. They suggested moving this item to the full Council at a future meeting.

- 314 Petersville Road Retaining Wall

Mr. Dunn and Mr. Gerstner stated the City's portion of this work could hold off until it can be budgeted in FY20. The Committee would like Ms. Ingram to draft a letter to the property owner stating the City's intentions so that the homeowner is not under any false assumptions of our intentions to move forward or fix any of the items that fall under the homeowner's responsibility.

- Public Works FY20 Budget Request

Mr. Gerstner stated he would like to purchase a vac truck in FY20, which will be put to good use in PW, Water, and Waste Water. The cost is around \$430,000, and financing options would be for either five or seven years, with the cost spread among all three departments. The Committee consented to discussing this item further during the budget season.

- Maple & B Street Guard Rail

The Committee discussed several options for this traffic safety device, and the consensus was to install several concrete pylons along the curb.

- I&I Updates/Violations

Mr. Gerstner and Ms. Myers discussed work completed on these violations to date. Mr. Dunn is going to research what options the City has when residents do not comply with our requests, i.e. shutting off water, etc. Mr. Gerstner is going to continue to research the violations that were not "quick and easy fixes." Mr. Dunn will begin working on a loan program to assist homeowners with funding options to replace their lateral lines only when necessary.

- Utility Billing Monthly Billing

Mr. Dunn and Ms. Myers discussed research conducted to date on this item. Several other municipalities were researched and none of them conduct monthly billing. They do all have forgiveness programs for high bills in varying formats. The Committee also discussed subsidizing the cost of external leak detectors that homeowners could purchase and install. The Mayor asked for Council Members present in the audience to begin sending him emails for their preference of the options discussed so that staff can take action.

- Utility Billing Extension – Government Shutdown

Mr. Dunn stated that bills will not be due until late February, and the shutdown may have ended by then. If not, he can draft an Ordinance allowing the Mayor & Council the authority to suspend bill due dates in special circumstances, such as this.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Dayton asked about several budgeted line items that have yet to be spent for I&I and other various water/sewer projects. They would like this money spent prior to the end of the fiscal year, so that it wasn't budgeted and increased rates, but not spent.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

-Prepared and submitted by Carrie Myers